

Competition

The basics on competing for EPA assistance programs

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Finding EPA Competitive Opportunities

- Grants.gov: www.grants.gov
 - Find current competitive opportunities
 - Synopses includes important info: funding amounts, eligible entities, submission deadline, and more
 - Searchable by CFDA, keyword, agency, type of entity, etc
 - Apply online
 - Automatic notifications of opportunities

Competitive Opportunities

- EPA Program Office Websites
 - Check program websites for current funding opportunities (ex: Office of Air and Radiation: http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html)
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): www.cfda.gov
 - Read more about assistance programs
 - Typical funding amounts, types of projects funded, eligible entities, and more

Other Resources

- EPA Grants 101 Tutorial
 - [http://epa.gov/ogd/training/resources for communities/epa grants 101.htm](http://epa.gov/ogd/training/resources_for_communities/epa_grants_101.htm)

Preparing Proposals

- Each funding opportunity announcement has unique instructions and requirements
- Read the announcement for:
 - Eligibility information, deadlines, proposal content, review criteria, and more
- EPA's Competition Policy
<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/policy.htm>
 - Familiarize yourself with EPA's policy on competition

Types of Announcements

- Request for Proposals (RFP)
 - Abbreviated application: workplan and a few forms
- Request for Initial Proposals (RFIP)
 - 2 Phases: (1) EPA receives initial proposals
(2) EPA requests full proposals from highest ranking applicants
- Request for Application (RFA)
 - Submission includes all forms and certifications necessary for award

Announcement

Contents/Highlights

- OMB Format

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/062303policy_directive.pdf

- Section I

- Describes types of projects
- What proposal has to address

Announcement Content/Highlights

- Section II
 - expected number of awards
 - expected funding amount
- Section III
 - list of eligible entities
 - Cost share/matching requirements if any
 - Threshold eligibility criteria:
 - may include legal, policy, relevance, programmatic, administrative, and/or financial criteria that have the effect of making an applicant, proposal/application, or project eligible or ineligible for award

Announcement Highlights

■ Section IV

- Content and form of application
 - Address Section I (program info), Section III (threshold criteria) and Section V (evaluation criteria)
- Submission method (typically hard-copy or electronically thru [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov))
- Submission dates and times
- Pay attention to deadlines and page limits

Announcement Highlights

- Section V

- Ranking criteria

- Criteria used to evaluate proposals
 - Must address ranking criteria in proposals
 - Other factors (in some announcements)

- Review and selection process

Announcement Highlights

■ Section VI

- Award notices
- Administrative and national policy requirements
- Reporting
- Dispute resolution process and debriefings

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>

- Debriefings for constructive feedback

Announcement Highlights

- Section VII
 - Agency Contacts
- Section VIII
 - Other information

Modifications

- EPA occasionally modifies announcements
 - Due dates, clarification of requirements, etc
- Automatic Notification
 - Sign up on grants.gov for automatic notification of modifications to specific announcements
 - Modifications posted on grants.gov

Communications with Applicants

- See Section 11 of the Competition Policy
<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/policy.htm>
- Limitations on what can be discussed and when
- Pre-proposal Assistance
 - Many programs will post Q&As on a website
 - Some programs offer conference calls/webinars where applicants can ask questions
 - This type of information is usually in Section IV or VII of announcements, if applicable

Communications with Applicants

- EPA can:
 - Answer applicant eligibility questions-if uncertain if you are eligible or your project is eligible ask before proposal submission
 - Clarify info on administrative aspects of proposal submission
 - Respond to requests for clarification of the announcement
 - NOTE: Clarifications that result in changes to the announcement must be communicated (via modification to the announcement) to all potential applicants

Communications with Applicants

- EPA cannot:
 - Offer to write proposals for applicants
 - Review or comment on draft proposals
 - Provide information on the Agency's approach to evaluating proposals beyond what is described in Section V of the announcement
 - Provide a competitive advantage to any applicant

Competitive Process

1. EPA prepares announcement
2. EPA posts announcement on program office website and [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
3. EPA receives applications/proposals from applicants
 - Hard copy and electronically
4. EPA evaluates proposals and makes selections
5. Issues awards